

A Little Leaven

The Workings of Malvina's Mind
Languaged Out

Reprinted from the
HOME MISSION MONTHLY

Woman's Board of Home Missions of the
Presbyterian Church, 156 Fifth Ave.
New York City, N. Y.

A LITTLE LEAVEN

THE WORKINGS OF MALVINA'S MIND
LANGUAGED OUT

IT'S just a year since Miss Banks came. It's my recollection we laid by corn the week before and here I am hoeing the last row of this year's crop. I reckon school will begin next week or such a matter, and I'm proud of it.

Just ten years old I was and never had learned one thing before Miss Banks started in to teach and I set in to go to her school. Set up housekeeping they did, she and her maw in a great big new old house. Miss Banks' right young and nice-looking and friendly, a plumb sweet thing, maw calls her.

A LITTLE LEAVEN

Pap he had a good word for the Presbyterians from the stump-go. He's traveled, pap has; he's been to Tennessee and South Carolina and he knows about things, he does. But how about some of the talk there was in the settlement! Said what the Presbyterians wanted was to buy up all the land and go to making the laws. Pap he said that was all foolishness, but if they did make the laws, they'd make mighty goods ones. He's keen for education, pap is, and for anything that'll build up the country.

Some of the low-down, no account people talked mighty fierce-like, and Luke Jimison, he sed if he had him a big gang of fellows, they'd come over and blow up the whole mess. Over on Salt Branch they went so far as to get them a preacher to preach the funeral of the band, but it didn't do one mite of harm to Miss Banks. Calvin says if that preacher uses any such awkward language over here, he'll get his face skinned. When Miss

A LITTLE LEAVEN

Banks hears about them vilifying her that-a-way, she just laughs and says, "We'll wait and maybe they'll find out the straight of it some day."

Calvin's an awful bad boy to be so young as he is, that's what everybody says. But I sort of think he ain't so wicked as he was. If he is my brother I can't help knowing how he used to cuss and go on. Folks were always down on him and saying there was no chance of improving of him only sending him onto the chain-gang and that he had bound to be hung in due time. I heard old Joe Gordon telling Miss Banks what an owdacious young-un he was and to not spare the hickory. I looked for trouble, but seem-like Calvin and Miss Banks just linked right on to one another. She treated him right, he says. She said one day in school, "If you expect for anybody to be mean, he'll be mean," says she, "without an accident." She's been telling the history class about George Wash-

A LITTLE LEAVEN

ington and Alexander the Great, and all those folks. I ain't in it, but I listen all the same, and Calvin, he listens, and he says he's tackled the job of being like one of those men. He ain't sure yet whether he'll be a general or a emperor, but "he'll be something, dogone it," that's what Calvin says.

Miss Banks' maw is mighty nice, too. All the neighbor-women think a sight of her. She's the masterish hand if anybody's sick. One time when Almira Craig was aiming to die, she just flew in and it 'wasn't but a little bit till she had her up and going. I mind me when Mrs. Morse's baby was mighty bad off; it hadn't any use of itself anyhow, and this time it was taking on powerful. Miss Banks' maw, she stuck it in a big pan of hot water. I was in there and I saw her do it. I never heard tell of anything like that before, but it fetched the baby out of those bad spells right at once.

A LITTLE LEAVEN

They live in the prettiest house, Miss Banks and her maw do. It has got four rooms and glass windows in every last one of them. We've got us a glass window now so as to not have to sit in the dark when its whizzing cold, or freeze to death with the shutter open, one. Pap, he aims to build him a good house one of these dodge times. He's been hauling the logs into the sawmill. Maw and I, we mean to keep it cleaner than we can this old shack. Old Aunt Polly Ann was lamenting the other day because she hadn't her a great fine house like Miss Banks' and pap he says, says he, when he was telling about it, "Mighty fine it would look after Aunt Polly Ann had been in it a week; she and the old man live just like ground-hogs, if they are my own blood-kin." I reckon it takes git-up to live like folks.

There are some of the things at Miss Banks' made out of boxes and covered with calico. They are just as cute. She

A LITTLE LEAVEN

says she will show me and Susanna how to make them.

Two years come September, pap took me over to Brush's Cove to a big meeting and there were big girls there all dressed up mighty fine with artificials in their hats. One had a blue dress and bunches of red ribbon tacked on to her shoulders and a green ribbon for her a belt. She laughed and whispered all enduring meeting and perked herself round similar to a jaybird. I told Susanna all about it when I came home and we allowed those girls must be awful smart; but now seems like the way Miss Banks fixes, and the way she does in time of peaching, suits us a heap better. We've set our heads, we have, Susanna and I, to be point-blank like her when we get big. Miss Banks doesn't use one mite of tobacco and her maw don't. I reckon I have obliged to quit it. It'll mighty nigh kill me, but I have it to do. There go

A LITTLE LEAVEN

along with you, old snuff-stick, I have no further use for you.

Miss Banks she went way off somewheres out West for vacation. I was powerful afraid she wouldn't find her way back again, but maw, she got a letter from her, says she'll be in about Wednesday. Maw says she wouldn't care if there came a carload of Miss Banks.

And if here ain't the end of the row and it the last one of all. Corn's laid by and directly comes school. I want to holler!



